Remarks

The amendment to the specification corrects an obvious error. This correction is apparent from the **Table** on page 12 where the density of the web can be calculated from the 0 % Microbial Cellulose column as follows: 2.75g/(25.24cmX6.18cmX0.214cm) = 0.083 g/cc.

The Examiner's objection to claim 2 is not understood. Applicants clearly claim a range to 0.5 microns and not a specific number. If the Examiner has a more appropriate suggestion, such is courteously requested.

Turning to the rejection of claims 1, 3, 5-11 and 14 under 35USC§102(e) as anticipated by Chen et al. 6,395,957 ("Chen"), reconsideration is respectfully requested. Each of these claims requires a substrate fibrous layer comprising micro-fine fibers. Applicants' specification clearly defines these fibers at page 6, line 22, as having diameters on the order of tenths of a micron and preferably in the range to 0.5 micron. As acknowledged by the Examiner, Chen's finest disclosed filament diameter is 1 denier which, for polypropylene, for example, calculates to about 12.5 microns, about 25 times higher than Applicants' preferred maximum diameter. Applicants also point out that, as discussed in the specification, micro-fine fibers are a relative commercial rarity, especially below about 0.6 micron. Clearly Chen does not anticipate the use of micro-fine fibers in the sense of Applicants' claims. The rejection is, therefore, in error and withdrawal is respectfully requested. Moreover, as to claim 14, the micro-fine fibers are wettable as opposed to the hydrophobic fibers described in Chen. The reference relied upon by the Examiner at col. 38, li. 6-8, is taken out of context as, reading further in that same text, Chen explains that the hydrophilic agents, if used, may not destroy the hydrophobic nature of the added fibers. It is submitted that Chen does not anticipate adding wettable micro-fine fibers as in Applicants' claim 14.

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 2, 4, 12-13 and 15 under 35U.S.C.§103(a) as obvious to one of skill in the art in view of Chen is also respectfully requested. As discussed above, Chen lacks any teaching of applied micro-fine fibers, and, Applicants submit, it would not be obvious, in the sense of 35U.S.C§103, to use fibers of a diameter less than about 1 micron in the absorbent materials of Chen. It should be appreciated that Chen is concerned with a liner material that promotes liquid flow through and presents a dry feel to the body. The hydrophobic layer with macroscopic openings is integral to the Chen structure, and it would not suggest the use of a layer of micro-fine fibers, particularly wettable

micro-fine fibers as claimed by Applicants for their transfer delay structure.

For the reasons stated, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable notice to that effect is respectfully solicited.

The undersigned may be reached at 770-587-8096.

Respectfully submitted,

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